



EGYPT PARLIAMENT WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF JUNE 24-30, 2018

Summary

- Speaker of the House Ali Abdel 'Al traveled to Germany this week to meet with prominent members of the German parliament; his visit included discussions with several committee chairs in the legislature on recent security and economic developments in Egypt. Egyptian media characterized his meetings in a positive light, though it is unclear whether the German representatives questioned Abdel 'Al, as he was at the European Parliament.
- Lack of quorum in general session last week led to Abdel 'Al delaying the start of session and threatening representatives over their attendance. His threats included publicizing repeat offenders, closing parts of the legislature building during general session, and subjecting representatives to any other punishments outlined in the House's bylaws.
- Representatives blamed the Egyptian Football Association for the team's poor performance in the World Cup. Officials in the legislature accused the association of corruption and called for some of its members to resign; a formal parliamentary investigation into the organization is under way.

Notable Developments

Abdel 'Al Travels to German Parliament:

Abdel 'Al traveled to Germany this past week and met with several ranking officials within the German parliament. Abdel 'Al held separate meetings with [Economy and Development](#) Committee Chairman Peter Ramsauer, [Economy and Energy](#) Committee Chairman Klaus Ernst, and the [Human Rights](#) Committee Chairwoman Gyde Jensen. During his various meetings, Abdel 'Al promoted German [investments](#) in Egypt based on recent economic reform, [migration](#) problems,

terrorism, and the current conditions of human rights in Egypt. Egyptian media characterized the response by German parliamentarians as overwhelmingly positive, though it is unclear whether these representatives pressed Abdel 'Al during questioning in a manner similar to that during his session with the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Abdel 'Al Threatens Representatives Following Poor Attendance:

During the legislature's most recent general session, representatives initially failed to meet quorum until Abdel 'Al warned parliamentarians to attend plenary session or face consequences. He outlined several potential punishments, including closing the lobby outside of the House's chambers during general session, listing the names of absent deputies on the chamber doors, releasing names of continuously absent representatives to their constituents and the media, and subjecting deputies to the previously installed internal punishments of parliament based on the body's bylaws. No representatives were publicly admonished for their absence following general session last week.

Representatives Blame Football Association for World Cup Performance:

Egypt's disappointing performance in the World Cup prompted outrage in the House, as legislators called for a formal investigation into the team's efforts and preparation. Representatives, including Samir al-Bateekhi of the Youth and Sports Committee, blamed the Egyptian Football Association for the team's poor performance. These representatives also accused the organization of financial corruption and called for ranking officials within the association to resign. Youth and Sports Committee Chairman Farag Omar announced that the committee is forming a fact-finding commission to investigate the association and its operations pertaining to the World Cup.

House Officials Celebrate Anniversary of June 30 Uprising:

Ahead of the anniversary of the June 30 demonstrations, which resulted in former president Muhammad Morsi's ouster, several ranking officials within the House congratulated Egyptians on the occasion. Arab Affairs Committee Chairman Saad al-Gamal called the event a triumph against individuals and terrorists who sought to destroy the state. Similarly, Youth and Sports Committee Chairman Farag Omar asserted that the June 30 revolution saved Egypt from experiencing years of conflict and instability similar to that in Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Meanwhile, Abdel 'Al sent President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi a message congratulating him on the occasion and praising him for his efforts in leading the country.

Other Developments

In Legislation:

The House approved the Leasing and Financing Law in its entirety after agreeing to it in principle on May 15. The bill includes additional regulations for small and medium enterprises and their financing operations.

The Suggestions and Complaints Committee approved Representative Ahmed Saad's Real Estate Tax Law and referred it to a joint committee of Budget and Constitutional Affairs. The bill would allow individuals who own properties in multiple governorates to submit relevant information for tax purposes to one central office rather than offices in each governorate.

The Social Solidarity Committee approved the National Council for Disabled Individuals Law. The bill establishes a national council to promote the economic and social interests of disabled individuals in Egypt; the legislation eliminates a similar national council for disabled individuals.

In Session:

The Education Committee [recommended](#) the formation of an independent supreme education council to provide additional oversight and policy recommendations for the national education system.

The Media Committee [postponed](#) its field visit to Alexandria for an indefinite period of time, though Chairman Osama Heikal did not provide an explanation on the decision to postpone the trip. The delegation [intended](#) to assess various archaeological sites and tourist locations in the area.

Representative Medhat al-Sharif of the Economic Affairs Committee [stated](#) that the committee is contemplating forming a loan committee under the cabinet's jurisdiction to assist in managing the nation's outstanding debts and ensuring they are paid in a timely fashion.

Representative Muhammad al-Husseini of the Local Administration Committee [submitted](#) a request to Abdel 'Al to provide further information on the government's plan to address the water shortage in Giza, especially as it pertains to the financial burden to resolve this situation.

The Human Rights Committee [condemned](#) the United States' decision to withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council, and accused the country of committing blatant human rights violations, especially in terms of its support for Israel.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee [refused](#) to lift the immunity of Representative Mortada Mansour following a request submitted by the prosecutor-general's office in regard to accusations of financial misdealings with the Zamalek Football Club. Abdel 'Al [addressed](#) Mansour in general session and warned him that this request ought to be the last one received by the legislature, as Mansour has frequently been under legal scrutiny.

In News and Statements:

Rumors [circulated](#) that Coalition in Support of Egypt Chairman Muhammad al-Suweidi resigned from his position; the coalition subsequently denied these rumors. Suweidi is currently abroad and unable to publicly respond to this development. Deputy Chairman Taher Abu Zeid also reportedly [resigned](#) from his position, which the coalition denied as well.

Representative Fawzi al-Sherbasi of the Housing Committee [praised](#) Sisi for improving relations between Egypt and Gulf countries to unprecedented levels; Sherbasi stressed these improved relationships in the context of ongoing conflict in Yemen and Iran's hostile actions in the region.

Representative Ayman Abul Alaa, parliamentary chairman of the Free Egyptians Party, [denounced](#) an [article](#) published by the *Independent* that suggested that Mohamed Salah ought to retire in light of the political situations that occurred at the World Cup. Abul Alaa [claimed](#) that the Muslim Brotherhood wrote the article in an attempt to discourage Salah.

Local Administration Chairman Ahmed al-Sageeni [met](#) with the Ukrainian ambassador to Egypt to discuss bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation.

Looking Ahead

- General session will **reconvene** on July 2 instead of July 1, after Sunday, July 1 was declared the observed national holiday to celebrate the June 30 uprising.
- After meeting with Abdel 'Al Sunday to discuss the preliminary cabinet agenda, Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli is expected to **present** the cabinet's agenda to parliament next week, according to Parliamentary Spokesman Salah Hassiballah.
- The Education Committee **expects** to complete its discussions of the draft Foreign Universities Law either Monday or Tuesday. The bill **provides** new regulations for international universities to attract them to open satellite campuses in Egypt.
- Representative Omar Hamrroush of the Religious Affairs Committee **stated** that the body will hold a series of meetings next week to finalize any pending legislation, prominent among them the Dar al-Ifta Law, which would **codify** the governing structure of the religious institution. Dar al-Ifta is the government body that issues fatwas, or religious legal opinions.
- Youth and Sports Committee Chairman Farag Amer **stated** that a meeting will be held Monday in parliament to discuss the performance of the World Cup team and the failures of the Egyptian Football Association leading up to the tournament.
- The Arab Affairs Committee will **hold** separate meetings next week to continue their discussions on the security and political situations in Libya and Palestine.



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Egypt Parliament Watch is the most comprehensive project on Egypt's elected legislature, providing analysis of the body's performance in fulfilling its constitutionally mandated tasks, the legislation it produces, and the political dynamics at play.